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## **DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS WINS INNOVATION AWARD** *Harvard University's Ash Institute Recognizes "Getting Ready" Program*

PHOENIX – The Arizona Department of Corrections has received a prestigious award from the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University for the program *Getting Ready: Keeping Communities Safe*.

*Getting Ready* facilitates inmate reentry into society by structuring the prison environment like the outside world, with real-world workdays and leisure time activities, decision-making, and earned incentives for inmates who succeed in the program. The program has had profound effects in reducing inmate recidivism and prison violence. The award announcement was made at the American Government Awards gala Tuesday evening in Washington, D.C., where Governor Janet Napolitano delivered the keynote address on the need for innovation in government.

"I want to congratulate the Department of Corrections and Director Dora Schriro for their creative thinking and hard work in putting 'corrections' back into the mission of the ADOC," Governor Napolitano said. "*Getting Ready* is a great example of the many creative approaches we're taking to policy issues in Arizona, and it represents what innovation can mean for the public and taxpayers."

The Department of Corrections devised *Getting Ready* in 2004 as an alternative to conventional corrections systems where staff exercises complete control over prisoners, giving inmates few opportunities to acquire and apply the basic skills that are critical to their success upon release.

*Getting Ready* has produced real public safety results: A study showed a 35 percent decrease in recidivism among inmates who participated in *Getting Ready* before their release from prison, in comparison to inmates of comparable risk. In addition, inmate-on-inmate violence is down by 37 percent, inmate-on-staff assaults by 51 percent, and inmate suicides by 33 percent. The initiative also cut inmate litigation by 42 percent and brought down staff vacancies from over 30 to fewer than 3 percent. Plummeting rates of institutional violence and recidivism represent a \$1.6 million reduction in spending in its first several years directly benefiting Arizona taxpayers.

"*Getting Ready* fundamentally changes how inmates do time. We operate our prisons like the real world as much as we can with similar rules, responsibilities and rewards," said Dora Schriro, the Director of the Arizona Department of Corrections. "*Getting Ready* is all-day, every-day, pragmatic pre-release preparation. It keeps communities safe while inmates are incarcerated and when they go home."

Since 1986, the Ash Institute's Innovations in American Government Award Program at Harvard Kennedy School has honored 193 federal, state, and local government agencies. This is the first-ever innovations award given by the Ash Institute to a department of corrections for prison-based reform.

For more information on the Office of the Governor, please visit [www.azgovernor.gov](http://www.azgovernor.gov).